the second required a firm and tactful handling of the distributive trades and the general public. As far as distribution was concerned Lord Devonport was well qualified to cope with the complex issues involved.

I felt that as a pre-condition for success it was essential that we should take the public into our confidence by a frank revelation of the facts. It might give temporary encouragement to the enemy. This consideration always arose whenever it was a question of taking the public into your confidence. Sometimes in war there are weaknesses and defects which it is important a nation should keep from the enemy's knowledge, in so far as that is possible. That involves not revealing them to your own nationals. What is known to 46,000,000 people cannot be long preserved as a secret from the knowledge of the world. But if it is withheld from your own nation, then you cannot rouse national apprehension, zeal and energy in the task of remedying the deficiencies. To judge where the balance of advantage lies is one of the most perplexing and responsible tasks of statesmanship. In the matter of munitions I concluded that the advantage to be reaped from willing co-operation at home more than balanced the important drawback of cheering the foe by an exposure of facts of which they were already

Need for public support

for food control

cognisant. I came to the same conclusion about our food supplies. I therefore gave a clear indication of the nature of these problems and of the methods by which we proposed to deal with them, in my first speech to the House as Prime Minister, on 19th December, 1916. In the course of that speech I said :—